

VZCZCXRO4730

RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
RUEHLM RUEHLZ RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSK RUEHSL RUEHSR RUEHVK
RUEHYG
DE RUEHRL #0891/01 2041423
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 231423Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4687
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BERLIN 000891

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR S/P-BEHRMAN; S/SRMC-PANDITH; EUR/PPD-WHITE AND HELLING;
EUR/PGI-WEINSTEIN AND ELDRIDGE; R-DAVIDSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV KPAO PREL SCUL GM

SUBJECT: GERMANY: REACTIONS TO CAIRO SPEECH AND PLANS FOR ONGOING
ENGAGEMENT

REF: STATE 71325

¶1. (U) Summary: Mission Germany conducted a range of activities to highlight President Obama's June 4 Cairo speech and to solicit feedback from local Muslim communities. Per reftel request, post provides preliminary feedback on our ongoing outreach efforts within Germany, including feedback from local stakeholders and partners on activities and programs related to the policy priorities outlined in the speech. Initial response to the President's speech has been exceedingly positive, though stakeholders are now eager to see action. In order to demonstrate U.S. commitment to dialogue and partnership, we will continue to build on our highly successful outreach programs and exchange activities and seek new opportunities to expand and deepen dialogue. End Summary.

Mission Germany Engages Local Audiences on June 4

¶2. (SBU) Mission Germany hosted in-house events and used social networking tools to engage local audiences and encourage them to view the President's speech to the Muslim world from Cairo, Egypt on June 4. In Berlin, a diverse German and American audience of approximately 50 students, journalists, politicians and community leaders watched the speech live, and shared their impressions of the speech and its implications for American engagement with the Muslim world in a discussion led by the MCPA. ConGen Duesseldorf hosted a similar event with influential Muslim contacts from Cologne, Duesseldorf and the Ruhr area. These fora enabled participants to exchange ideas with each other regarding the future of America's relationship to the Muslim world, as well as to discuss opportunities for partnership going forward. On June 5, the Munich CG highlighted the speech in a television interview which aired four times that day.

Initial Reactions to Cairo Speech

¶3. (SBU) Overall response to the speech has been overwhelmingly positive. Muslim contacts, in particular, noted that the speech outlined constructive ways that the United States and Muslim communities around the world can bridge some of the differences that have divided them. Aiman Mazyek, General Secretary of the Central Council for Muslims, who attended the ConGen Duesseldorf event, was very outspoken, saying that "with this speech, the U.S. has taken back moral authority" in the world. He called the speech "balm for the Muslim soul," a phrase that he repeated frequently in subsequent local TV and newspaper interviews.

¶4. (U) Duesseldorf participants described the President as the "proto-type of a globalized man" and asserted that no American president "has ever shown so much respect for the Muslim world." Audiences at both events were impressed that Obama quoted the Koran, respectfully referring to it as the "Holy Koran." They stated that

Obama and America offered hope for the Muslim world.

15. (U) According to press reports, the General Secretary of the Central Council for Jews praised the President's efforts to promote better relations with the Islamic world and commented that a success for the President "would be a success for world freedom."

16. (SBU) During the June 4 discussions and in subsequent conversations with individuals, contacts praised both the content of the speech and its respectful tone; however, many emphasized that they needed to see action and results before they got too excited. A high-level Muslim contact in Berlin who had traveled to Israel after June 4 noted that the President's speech was also received very enthusiastically in the Middle East and could "be linked to Hezbollah's loss in the elections" and the declining influence of extremist groups like al-Qaida. Arabs, she noted, were very impressed by the fact that the President acknowledged the suffering of the Palestinians and had referred to "Palestine." The President had earned the respect of the Arabs through his speech and was viewed as "one of them," she said, since his father was a Muslim. He now had an opportunity to "reach the masses" and "win hearts," but he must "move quickly" to implement the initiatives outlined in the speech, she cautioned, before enthusiasm wanes.

Continued Dialogue through Ongoing Outreach

17. (U) Muslim Contacts and other stakeholders have lauded our extremely active Muslim engagement programming during the past several years and urged us to expand these activities, particularly among Muslim youth. The Mission's Muslim Working Group intends to continue our efforts through building on programming conducted over the past year in order to facilitate a continued consultative process. Successful 2008/2009 programs include:

BERLIN 00000891 002 OF 003

-- IntegrationXchange Conference: IntegrationXchange participants from Germany and the U.S. who had traveled to one another's countries to learn first-hand about integration issues shared their experiences with each other and with integration practitioners from all over Germany. Mission Germany's alumni activities continue to support the established network.

-- R-sponsored Citizen Dialogue program: American Muslims met with German Muslims throughout Germany to discuss issues of common interest.

-- Mission Germany's "Building Bridges" series: This successful conference series on immigrant youth and the media continued in 2008 with conferences in Hamburg and Munich. Additional conferences are planned for 2009. The series is a partnership project between Mission Germany and the German government-funded Union for Democracy and Tolerance.

-- Intercultural and Interfaith Women's Network: ConGen Frankfurt continued this innovative program which brings Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Hindu women from the Frankfurt area together to discuss shared concerns and develop strategies to address challenges within their communities.

-- Windows on America: Mission Germany continued its highly-successful public-private partnership exchange program for Muslim and immigrant high school students, sending 50 students and their teachers to the U.S. The program continues to garner extremely positive attention from the media and German public.

-- "The Streets of Wedding - Das Musical:" This Mission Germany-initiated musical theater project moved audiences across Germany in a national tour, co-sponsored by the Mission and the German Ministry of Interior.

-- High-level engagement: The Ambassador and CGs hosted and attended Iftar dinners, interfaith events, and spoke to Muslim/Turkish business and community organizations. This engagement strengthened our relationships with these organizations and resulted in greater

acceptance of Turkish-Islamic organizations and mosques by local governments.

-- Meetings with Muslim Communities: Mission-wide meetings with prominent leaders from the Muslim communities throughout Germany, including from the Interior Ministry's Islam Conference, provided opportunities to discuss relevant issues and provide reporting to Washington to better inform our efforts and initiatives.

-- International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP): Mission Germany continued to use the IVLP to strengthen contact with prominent German Muslims; 18 of our 56 IVLP participants in FY 2008 were German Muslims. We expect similar numbers in FY 2009.

¶18. (U) In addition to scaling-up many of these existing activities, we also plan to expand outreach to Turkish media and launch several new initiatives in the coming year, including:

-- Twitter: Establish and maintain a Twitter stream specifically designed for Muslim youth.

-- Muslim Film Series: Develop a film series to engage Muslim youth. We will consider partnering with a local media institute which produced a film series on young Muslims in Germany.

-- Video Conferences: Offer a video conference to bring young Muslims in Germany into direct contact with their counterparts in the U.S.

-- Youth Alumni Event: Organize a youth-oriented alumni event for young minority alumni to strengthen contact with the Mission and facilitate mentoring among Windows on America alumni and young alumni of other USG exchange programs, such as Fulbright, the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) program, and the Youth Visitor Program.

-- MeetUS: Expand outreach to Muslim youth through the Mission's MeetUS initiative which enables Mission staff and American volunteers to speak with students at local high schools about the U.S. and American values. In addition to our traditional youth outreach, we will target predominantly Muslim schools and classes taught by former IVLP and Voluntary Visitor (VolVis) participants.

-- Job Internships: Institute an internship project designed to provide immigrant youth with two-week unpaid internships at companies. Students will be selected based on their proven motivation and qualifications.

BERLIN 00000891 003 OF 003

-- Broader Contact Events: Continue outreach efforts by hosting events more broadly, such as Iftars, contact dinners, interfaith events and other appropriate events.

¶19. (U) Per reftel request, we will continue to report on the consultative process, providing feedback on our ongoing outreach efforts within Germany as they develop.

Bradtko